

"Whether or not a similar commission in Los Angeles County will meet with the same degree of success depends, of course, upon the caliber of persons appointed to such commission and the integrity of the personnel through whom such commission will administer its affairs."

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In view of the fact that the proposed charter amendment heretofore mentioned in this report was received by the Board of Supervisors at too late a date for their consideration and to be placed on the November, 1938, ballot, your committee suggested that an Institutions Commission be established by ordinance, which met the approval of the Board.

Your committee feels that if, and when, an ordinance is adopted and the Institutions Commission comes into being, much can then be done to bring the various institutions under one central responsible authority. A central clearing house of information could thus be established, and the transfer of patients from one institution to another, wherever necessary, could be much more expeditiously accomplished. . . .

Respectfully submitted,

CHARITIES AND HEALTH COMMITTEE.

William W. Nuzum, *Chairman*.

Approved, January 11, 1939.

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#### Hospital Aid Group Asks Economies

*Would Put Issue Up to Board*

"Too Complex System" Is Pointed Out

A study of County General Hospital management today was advocated by the hospital advisory committee as a means toward proper and economical management.

The committee includes Dr. Robert A. Millikan, Archibald B. Young and Albert B. Ruddock of Pasadena, and Maynard McFie, Mrs. John D. Fredericks, J. Walker Schneider, Mrs. Helen Van Dyke, John C. Macfarland and Roy E. Noftzger. All joined in the recommendation except Mr. Young, who was absent from the city and could not be reached.

In its communication received by the Board of Supervisors today, the advisory committee declared that the effectiveness and economical operation of the hospital is handicapped by the complexity of relationships between different authorities. The committee also complains of the lack of clarity of its own position.

Specific reference is made to plans of the Board of Supervisors to combine the hospital and charities department managements. Such a move should not be made until the study suggested has been completed. The committee recommended that either it be named to conduct this study or a special committee be appointed to do so.—*Pasadena Star News*, February 18.

### ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SURGEON GENERAL, U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 1938: SUMMARY

Surgeon General Thomas Parran in his annual report said: "A greater advance has been made in public health in the United States during the past two years than ever before within a comparable period."

Doctor Parran, reviewing the work of the organization, at the close of the 140th year of its existence, noted developments that have followed the assumption of new responsibilities by the Government in matters relating to public health, particularly with reference to activities made possible through the enactment by Congress of the Social Security Act, the Venereal Disease Control Act and the National Cancer Institute Act.

#### GENERAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Commenting upon health conditions in the United States during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1938, the report states that the general death rate for the calendar year 1937 was 10.9 per 1,000 population, as compared with 11.3 for the pre-

ceding year. This favorable condition continued in 1938, when preliminary figures for the first six months disclosed a mortality rate of 10.8 per 1,000 population as compared with 11.8 for the corresponding period of 1937.

There was also recorded a decrease in infant mortality from 57.1 per 1,000 live births for 1936 to 54.4 in 1937. The maternal mortality rate continued to decline; 4.6 per 1,000 live births in 1937 against 5.3 during 1936.

As infant, maternal and general death rates are sensitive indexes of prevailing health conditions, the reduced rates in these fields indicate a decidedly favorable trend.

Tuberculosis mortality resumed a downward course after a slight increase in 1936. The improvement was apparent in the provisional tuberculosis death rate which declined from 51.7 per 100,000 population in 1936 to 49.6 in 1937.

During 1937 lowered death rates were reported for typhoid fever, scarlet fever, diphtheria, tuberculosis, malaria, pellagra, nephritis and puerperal causes. With regard to smallpox, Doctor Parran said: "During 1937 a total of 11,673 cases of smallpox was reported, as compared with 7,834 in 1936 and 7,957 in 1935. The number of reported cases in 1937 was the highest since 1931. Fortunately the prevailing smallpox is of a mild, nonvirulent type, causing relatively few deaths. The eradication of this unnecessary disease depends upon the intelligent application of vaccination."

The United States suffered minor epidemics of influenza and poliomyelitis in 1937. The number of cases of poliomyelitis, 9,511, has been exceeded only in four previous years for which records are available, 1916, 1927, 1931 and 1935.

The leading causes of death in 1937 were diseases of the heart, cancer and other malignant tumors, pneumonia, cerebral hemorrhage and softening, nephritis, accidents (except automobile) and tuberculosis.

#### QUARANTINE AND IMMIGRATION

The magnitude of federal quarantine and immigration activities is indicated by the Public Health Service inspection of ports at entry of 1,784 airplanes carrying 23,172 passengers and inspection of 15,873 vessels carrying 789,591 passengers and 1,196,688 seamen. Fumigation of 1,004 vessels was performed and 5,399 rats were examined for evidence of plague infection. Medical officers at various United States ports of entry inspected 2,447,339 alien passengers and 805,306 alien seamen. Of these, 20,372 passengers and 1,438 seamen were reported as having some certifiable disease or defect. In foreign countries 65,261 applications for immigration visas were examined by Public Health Service officers.

The continued success of so-called radio pratique at New York and Boston made practicable the extension of this time-saving measure to certain vessels entering the ports of San Francisco and Los Angeles.

#### VENEREAL DISEASE CONTROL

The most important event in the campaign against the venereal diseases during the fiscal year was the enactment by the Congress of the Venereal Disease Control Act, whereby facilities for the more effective control of syphilis and gonorrhea were placed upon a permanent national basis.

During the year the Congress appropriated \$3,000,000 for the purpose of assisting States and their political subdivisions in establishing and maintaining adequate measures for the prevention, control and treatment of venereal diseases. There were also included provisions for training of personnel and for making studies, investigations and conducting demonstrations designed to develop more effective control measures.

The use of Social Security funds for the training of physicians in the clinical management and public health control of the venereal diseases was continued in several universities and clinics. A number of State health officers

availed themselves of this opportunity to recruit qualified personnel. . . .

The experimental control of syphilis among indigent people of rural areas was demonstrated by the use of a trailer clinic in Georgia. . . .

#### MENTAL HYGIENE

With the completion of the Public Health Service hospital at Fort Worth, Texas, for the care and treatment of drug addicts the facilities for this specialized work have been materially increased. The hospital at Lexington, Kentucky, engaged in treating drug addicts and making scientific investigations, operated to full capacity with an average daily census of 949 patients.

The Public Health Service continued to supervise and furnish medical, psychiatric, technical and other scientific services to federal and penal institutions. Special studies were conducted in cooperation with the Mental Hygiene Survey Committee to stimulate interest in the adequate care of the mentally ill, to bring about greater equality and wider distribution of facilities, promote uniform policies and improve the facilities for psychiatric instruction.

A feature of the work of this division was the field studies in mental hygiene for determining the basic nature and factors involved in the production of mental disorders encountered in a typical American community.

#### MARINE HOSPITALS AND RELIEF STATIONS

The twenty-seven hospitals of the Public Health Service, engaged in the care and treatment of legally designated beneficiaries, and also in scientific clinical research, furnished hospital and outpatient relief at 154 ports, where 566,931 accredited persons applied for treatment. This represents an increase of 211,121 patients over the preceding year. Merchant seamen continued to constitute the largest class of beneficiaries.

Research was continued in pyretotherapy, focal infections, arthritis and psoriasis. Vitamin D was shown to be valuable in the treatment of psoriasis.

#### NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH

The erection of a group of specially designed structures for the National Institute of Health on a site near Bethesda, Maryland, makes available increased facilities for scientific research into the causes and prevention of disease. The investigative work of the Institute covers an increasingly broad field. Continued attention was directed to the control of biologic products, particularly antipneumococcal rabbit serum, antimeningococcal serum, and close supervision over the stability of arsphenamine.

In the field of industrial hygiene investigations were directed to the development of means for the protection and the improvement of the health of workers in various fields of industry among which the pottery, granite, lead storage batteries, fur and manganese industries may be mentioned.

"The activities of the National Institute of Health," comments the Surgeon General, "are becoming increasingly varied and numerous. Thus, one group of workers is engaged in chemical and chemotherapy research while another is directing its attention to studies of such infectious diseases as Rocky Mountain spotted fever, typhus fever, scarlet fever, Weil's disease, leprosy and poliomyelitis. A special series of investigations have shed considerable light upon the various phases of trichinosis infection and the means of its prevention. Clinical, epidemiological and laboratory studies of heart disease, especially the rheumatic type, have produced valuable information."

The interesting discovery was made that flourides, which cause mottled enamel that disfiguring discoloration of the teeth, may be removed from drinking water by treatment with manganese dioxide, a method which gives promise of economical development.

A firm basis for future cancer studies is being laid through grants-in-aid to selected institutions and the training of research specialists. Already a broad field of investigation is receiving attention.

#### COÖPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

Every state and many cities, as well as every department and independent agency of the Federal Government has received some degree of assistance from the Public Health Service in solving special health problems arising in the course of routine operations. This coöperative work, carried on principally by the Division of States Relations, is one of the most important functions of the Service.

The availability of funds under the provisions of the Social Security Act has made it possible to assist in improving state and local health administration. It is especially noteworthy that whole-time health services in rural areas have been greatly augmented. From January 1, 1935, to December, 1937, there was an increase in full-time health units of 96 per cent. Facilities for the promotion and supervision of such full-time facilities have been developed in nineteen states.

Stimulated by federal grants-in-aid the state and local appropriations for public health purposes have increased \$8,000,000 annually.

Coöperation was continued with the states and the Works Progress Administration by providing technical supervision of work relief labor projects for the construction of sanitary toilets, malaria control drainage in the South and sealing of abandoned coal mines. Certification of water supplies used by interstate carriers, a valuable measure in preventing water-borne illness, continued without interruption.

#### NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM

"It is a matter of grave concern," comments Doctor Parran, "that approximately 40,000,000 people in the United States—the lower economic third of our population—are unable to provide themselves with medical care during serious illness. In the country as a whole there is a deficiency of 360,000 hospital beds, including facilities for the care of mental and tuberculous patients."

Fortunately, the National Health Survey, conducted several years ago by the Public Health Service with work relief personnel, has furnished a great deal of reliable, even though astounding, information concerning the kinds of illness prevailing in this "third of the population," the ages of the victims, their approximate economic status, their employability and other facts closely related to their ability to secure adequate medical treatment.

When these data had been studied and tentative conclusions formulated by the President's Interdepartmental Committee on Coordination of Health and Welfare Activities, it was obvious that the Federal Government had a definite responsibility in seeking a remedy for this undesirable state of affairs. It was shown, for instance, that despite the improvement of state and local health services resulting from the application of grant-in-aid provisions under Titles V and VI of the Social Security Act there are large rural areas and many cities in which adequate health service is not yet available. Only a few states have even fairly satisfactory programs for the prevention of mortality from pneumonia and cancer and there still are serious deficiencies in the control of tuberculosis and malaria. Very little is being done by most of the states in the field of mental hygiene, and there is need for a much greater expansion of industrial hygiene activities.

In closing his report Surgeon General Parran recommended among other essentials, the establishment in the National Institute of Health of a unit for wider chemotherapy investigations, additional funds under the Venereal Disease Control Act on an increasing scale until an annual appropriation of \$25,000,000 is reached, and the establishment of a neurological institute for laboratory and clinical investigations of mental and nervous diseases.